

Cazayoux Supports Initial Disaster Relief Bill

Â Disaster Tax Relief Act of 2008 contains important tax relief measures for Gulf Coast homeowners, businesses

WASHINGTON, DC- Congressman Don Cazayoux voted for H.R. 2638, the Consolidated Security, Disaster Assistance, and Continuing Appropriations Act of 2009. In addition to providing the necessary continuing appropriations for the Government to function, it contains some disaster relief funding for areas of the country affected by natural disasters.

"While I am disappointed that the continuing resolution did not contain all of the disaster relief requests made by Governor Jindal and the Louisiana delegation, I am pleased that Congress has acted swiftly in passing an initial disaster relief bill," Cazayoux said. "Though it contains funding for levees, Community Development Block Grants, and additional funding for FEMA, it did not include important direct funding for farmers, hospitals and nursing homes, and law enforcement agencies. It is my hope, however, that Louisiana will be able to use Community Development Block Grants to fund critical needs, such as law enforcement priorities, that are not specifically included in this legislation."

"Though there are many important issues that our country must face in the coming days, it was essential that we pass initial disaster assistance legislation in this appropriations bill so the Gulf Coast has some of the additional resources it needs to rebuild."

This Continuing Resolution will allow the federal government to operate at levels similar to Fiscal Year 2008 through March of 2009. Agencies that are critical to Louisiana, such as the Corps of Engineers, will be able to continue work on essential flood control projects such as the Comite River Diversion Project in East Baton Rouge Parish. Earlier in the year, Congressman Cazayoux was able to include \$10 million for the Comite Diversion Project in the Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee bill and is urging the Corps to expedite critical work on this flood control project in anticipation that funding for Comite will be continued next year.

Funding in H.R. 2638, which will be allocated to areas declared as Federal disaster zones, includes, but is not limited to:

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\$7.96 Billion to FEMA through the Disaster Recovery Fund
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\$6.5 Billion to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for Community Development Block Grants
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\$1.538 Billion to the Corps of Engineers to fund the 30-year non-federal share for New Orleans Levees
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\$850 Million to the Federal Highway Administration for emergency relief

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\$740 Million to the Corps of Engineers for operations and maintenance

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\$600 Million to the Department of Health and Human Services for Social Services Block Grants

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\$498 Million to the Small Business Administration as a direct subsidy to its disaster loan program

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\$415 Million to the Corps of Engineers for Flood Control and Coastal Emergencies

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\$400 Million to the Economic Development Administration for the Economic Development Assistance fund

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\$188 Million to the United States Department of Agriculture for Rural Development Disaster assistance fund

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\$115 Million to the Farm Service Agency for its Emergency Conservation Program

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\$100 Million to the Natural Resources Conservation Service for the emergency watershed

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\$100 Million to the Red Cross for disaster recovery activities in response to recent disasters

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\$85 Million to HUD for tenant-based rental assistance

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\$82.4 Million to the Corps of Engineers to federally maintain the Mississippi River and its tributaries

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\$75 Million to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration for fisheries disaster assistance

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\$50 Million to HUD for project-based rental assistance

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\$30 Million to the Department of Education for school improvement and higher education disaster relief

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\$15 Million to HUD for the Public Housing Capital fund

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